

down. Lives are depending on it. We cannot wish this away, and denial is not a treatment.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring H.R. 3717, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. Please help, because where there is no help, there is no hope.

TAKE ACTION AND VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House of Representatives stood in solidarity and silence as we once again rose to acknowledge another death, another shooting, another loss of life again at one of our schools. We rose out of respect for the victims and their families, as we have done repeatedly.

On average, there has been a shooting in a school a week. The American people are outraged. They no longer want Congress' silence. They want to hear Congress' voice.

In America, the most important thing that we can do is vote; the most patriotic thing that we can do is vote. But in this Chamber, we have yet to take up simple legislation on background checks.

Now, let me be very specific about that.

PAT TOOMEY, JOE MANCHIN, two of the most conservative Senators in the United States Congress, put together a very narrowly constructed compromise that called for universal background checks to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill.

This is not complicated. It is supported by 92 percent of the American people and 76 percent of the NRA. JOHN BOEHNER, ERIC CANTOR, KEVIN MCCARTHY, CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS are honorable people. They know what the right thing to do is. And the right thing here, whatever side you come down on this issue, is to give the people in the people's House a vote.

How many more times are we going to hear the pleas from parents who are crying out for Congress to take action? In a body where many people pride themselves on the right to life, why will we not rise to do everything to protect our schoolchildren?

When I was growing up, we used to have drills because we were fearful of nuclear annihilation by Russia. Today our schools go through routine lockdown drills for fear of our own citizens.

Congress has got to act or Congress, as I have said before on this floor, is duplicitous in every single tragedy that takes place, duplicitous because of its inaction. It is the morally right thing to do to cast a vote.

However you feel on this issue, and there are strong feelings about it, but the American people, and clearly the families of these victims, need to know that minimally their democracy was

willing not to stand in silence and in remorse, as important as that was and is, but to take action and vote.

U.S.-SERBIA ALLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, since our founding, Americans have always had to fight for the liberty and freedom that we have. Throughout our history, we have had allies from other parts of the world on our side ready to help us, and we have been ready to help them stand together for freedom over tyranny.

Today, I want to commemorate one of our most important allies: the people of Serbia. For more than 130 years, we have had a close relationship with the Serbian people.

I have on my staff here in Washington a Serbian American, Blair Bjellos, who is my victim's advocate. When I was in Texas as a judge, my chief of staff, Elaine Dudich Stolte, who now runs the best children's assessment center in the world, worked for me. Both are of Serbian descent.

Our friendship with the Serbians is based on our shared belief in democracy and standing up for liberty. During both World War I and World War II, our two countries fought on the same battlefield and our people shared and shed blood together. Because of that brotherhood, we have a special relationship.

During World War I, Austria-Hungary tried to pick a fight with Serbia, through the July Ultimatum. Of course, the Ultimatum wasn't a deal at all, and it was purposely unacceptable and meant to provoke a war with the two nations. Despite being 10 times smaller than Austria-Hungary, Serbia, an independent, freedom-loving nation, refused to back down to the aggressor. Like a true David versus Goliath, the Serbian people fought valiantly with us against the central powers in World War I. In the end, 25 percent of the Serbian population was killed during that war.

Despite the toll World War I took on Serbia, when World War II started, they were allies again. There are numerous accounts of bravery that the Serbs conducted during World War II, and a lot of that was not known to the world until recently. I just want to talk about one of those.

Perhaps the most inspiring report of bravery and brotherhood was shown during the Halyard Mission, when Serbian General Draza Mihailovich and Serbian American George Vujnovich led a mission to save American pilots that had been shot down by Nazi planes behind the lines in Serbia.

In 1944, hundreds of B-17 and B-24 fighter pilots and their crews were shot down by the Nazi Luftwaffe over what we now know as Serbia. General Mihailovich immediately began finding those pilots and members of the crew

and hid them in barns and farmhouses throughout Serbia, wherever he could find them shelter. He and his men and local Serbian civilians hid our troops. They risked their lives in doing so, and many of them later paid the consequences when the Nazis found out about it.

When Mihailovich radioed Washington to alert them of his actions, here in the United States, Vujnovich, an OSS agent of Serbian descent, found out and planned a daring rescue mission. Vujnovich would train Allied Forces on how to act like Serbs and sneak them into Nazi territory to save the downed pilots and their crews. Once in, they would help guide U.S. planes into the country to pick up the downed pilots.

With the help of local Serbs, the undercover U.S. soldiers and General Mihailovich built a makeshift runway in just 9 days. They had no sophisticated tools or machinery. They just used oxen, wagons, brute strength, and the tools that they could find. Over the next 6 months, Allied planes flew right under Nazi noses to land on that crude airstrip.

I was most fortunate to have known one of those brave men. Serbian George Dudich was among those who risked his life to save those American downed pilots. When Mr. Dudich and his family later came to the United States after Communist Tito took over, he took time to find many of those downed pilots and crew members to meet with them once again. In total, the Halyard Mission saved 512 U.S. airmen. Not one American was lost, although many Serbs died in those rescues. Unfortunately, the United States took the wrong side after the war and we supported Tito, a communist, rather than Mihailovich, to lead Serbia.

We did not recognize Mihailovich's deeds until recently, and now he has been awarded the Legion of Merit; and Vujnovich, at 95 years old, received a Bronze Star from the United States.

Many Americans and many American Serbs served together then, and I want to congratulate the relationship and commemorate the relationship between the United States and Serbia during the wars and the relationship the two countries have today.

And that's just the way it is.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Eytan Hammerman, Temple Beth Shalom, Mahopac, New York, offered the following prayer:

Our God and God of our ancestors, we rise in prayer in one of the world's most sacred spaces. This hallowed Hall combines enormous power with awesome responsibility. We pray that You, O God, inspire those who stand before You today—mere mortals—women and men, young and old, the many races, colors, and ancestries that make up our blessed country.

In the Jewish calendar, we have just concluded the Feast of Weeks, marking, we are taught, the receipt of the Bible at Mount Sinai. This was the culmination of a march from bondage and slavery toward freedom and responsibility. We ask that You bless the Members of this august body as they work to guarantee freedom in our day so that we may all live long lives; peaceful lives of goodness and blessing; lives free from shame; lives filled with abundance and honor; and lives in which our hearts' desire for goodness—for one and all—will be fulfilled.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MEEHAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI EYTAN HAMMERMAN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I welcome Rabbi Eytan Hammerman of Temple Beth Shalom to the House of Representatives and thank him for serving as today's guest chaplain.

Rabbi Hammerman leads the congregation at Temple Beth Shalom and is passionate about serving his neighbors in Mahopac, New York.

A distinguished scholar, Rabbi Hammerman holds a B.A. and a master's degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City and a degree in political science from Co-

lumbia University. Before he joined Temple Beth Shalom in 2010, he served small and large congregations in Baltimore, Maryland; White Plains, New York; and northern New Jersey, in addition to serving as director of the Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute here in Washington, D.C.

Rabbi Hammerman has served the Mahopac community since he was ordained in 2010, and his leadership has united people all throughout the community—no matter what their beliefs or what their background.

Not only a religious leader, he has long been a political advocate for justice and equality, and especially for a reduction in the horrible plague of gun violence we see in our country.

He is joined here today by his wife, Rebecca, and his three beautiful daughters, Ary, Rena, and Ilana, as well as his mother- and father-in-law, Marjorie and Dr. Steven Hoffman.

Not only a religious leader, he is also my friend, and I am proud to call him my friend. I hope you will join me in welcoming Rabbi Hammerman.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF JAMES F. KILCUR OF WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, last week, I attended the Transportation Management Association of Chester County for its annual legislative breakfast. At the breakfast, the association posthumously honored James F. Kilcur as its executive director emeritus. It is a very special recognition by his colleagues within the transportation industry. I can't think of anybody more deserving of this distinction than Jim, and I join the association in honoring Jim's service to southeastern Pennsylvania.

Jim Kilcur, of West Chester, Pennsylvania, died on Wednesday, February 19, 2014. Born in northeast Philadelphia, Jim was a proud Philadelphia native and a pillar of his community. He was a labor lawyer admired for his trusted counsel and respected by all for his ability to get to a fair resolution of any matter. Jim stood out at Saul Ewing as a partner and at Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority as general counsel for nearly a decade. Then, just as now, everybody respected Jim.

I had the pleasure to work with Jim during his time at SEPTA. He was a confident, intelligent man, and while tolerant of other positions, was steadfast in his own. He was decisive, and there was no waffling or ambiguity in his thinking.

Jim was the chairman of the board of trustees of his alma mater, DeSales University in Center Valley, and a proud alumni of Cardinal Dougherty High School.

I would like to commend Jim on his devoted service to his community, to his church, and his impressive career history, and his life of love and devotion to his family, especially his wife. Let me remember Jim with this legacy.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that yesterday the House adopted my amendment to prevent communities that have experienced recent population loss from being excluded from the Community Development Block Grant program.

Since the creation of the Community Development Block Grant program in 1974, HUD has designated "entitlement communities," which included cities with a population of at least 50,000. For 40 years, HUD has allowed cities that have had their populations fall below 50,000 to continue to participate in the program.

Unfortunately, HUD signaled a desire to change course and to remove these cities from the program. This would have devastated 127 cities in 31 States, including the city of Niagara Falls in my congressional district.

The Community Development Block Grant program has become a foundation for community and economic development across the Nation and in western New York.

I am pleased that communities who rely on this funding will continue to have access to this critical resource.

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH RESOLUTION

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today, I, along with my colleague, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS, who is here with me today, am introducing an important bipartisan resolution targeting heart disease in women.

Dubbed "the silent killer," this disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. Since 1984, more women have died of heart disease than men. It is the leading cause of death in West Virginia, claiming more than 4,800 lives in the year 2010.

Preventative screenings can make a huge difference in helping women learn the risk of heart disease and how to reduce that risk. Women often rely on their OB/GYNs and community health centers for primary care, and our resolution seeks to educate women of all ages on the need to make heart health an important part of their screening